

Conversations that you've entered, either at or against your will, will go on without you. Group chats ensure this. And for the groups that chat across time zones, the mornings that arrive in 3 to 9 hour intervals come with a backlog of unread messages, identifiable first only by their volume. 70 unread messages, usually a wash of logistics and in-jokes, indicate that throughout any given day your friends are talking and it is expected that you're listening. You are the joker and the laugh track.

Situational comedies happen in fixed locations. The actor's relationships exist as closed circuits, moving between apartments often located in the same building, an office, a coffee shop, diner, or bar. They occur on a soundstage, rarely ever do they occur in the world. Situational comedies are categorized by clearly delineated points of conflict – points rooting in one of these physical spaces, and often involving an object or incident. Their episode titles reflect this: “The Chinese Restaurant,” “The One with the Breast Milk,” “The Marine Biologist,” “The One with Five Steaks and an Eggplant.” Sitcoms are the comedies of people with conflicts. But in the non-spatial, or rather the textual space of the group chat, you don't need conflict to move along the plot line.

Group chats are the comedies of people with issues. They are the comedies of people with relationships that extend into the world who are sometimes together and sometimes apart; whose groups fracture and reassemble into ongoing group chats with the same people in different constellations. They are the people whose issues are irreducible to isolated incidents. So interjecting these chats are the build up and outbursts of pure emotion. And this emotion expressed in emojis, photos, and texts, are sent under the maxim that sharing is caring. You can clearly tell that someone is losing it when they start to overshare in any context, but it's blatant when you receive 20 messages in rapid succession. For the recipient this act moves from care to onslaught. One could even say that oversharing is a form of emotional abuse. Rather than a psychotic break, the overshare is a psychic flood.

All that is to say, that *No Time To Explain* is not a sitcom, it's a social space without a venue. The scaffolding of bars, nightclubs, restaurants and city streets have fallen away, and what remains are the actors hashing out their issues, in a state of constant overshare perched in the cloud.

-- Dena Yago

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